

# Rock Creek Park

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Rock Creek Park  
<http://www.nps.gov/rocr/>



# Park News and Schedule of Events



September, October, November  
2012

# Welcome to Rock Creek Park



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

## Rock Creek Park

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

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Please tell us what you think.  
Email your comments to:  
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Hello and welcome to Rock Creek Park! With the leaves of the nation's forests turning yellow, orange, and red and with relief from the hot summer sun, autumn is a great time to explore the natural and cultural gems of Rock Creek Park. Enjoy a healthy walk, hike or run on one of our 32 miles of trails, or go for a bicycle ride on one of our paved trails through the beautiful fall foliage.

Or you may choose to exercise your mind by attending one of our many free programs and special events. Join us for Lincoln-Thomas Day, Rock Creek Park Day, Peirce Mill Candlelight Tours, and special astronomy programs in the only planetarium in the National Park System.

You will notice that this newsletter does not have a title. We are seeking your input and encourage you to submit your ideas. Please send your ideas to [ROCR\\_Superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:ROCR_Superintendent@nps.gov) and look for the new title in the December edition.

Enjoy your park experience, and enjoy learning about our many special events and programs in this newsletter. Happy Autumn!

Sincerely,

Tara Morrison  
Superintendent



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# Special Events & Programs in September

## Exploring the Universe: Peace in the Sky

Saturdays in September

4:00 PM at the Nature Center and Planetarium  
Space is the dominion for all humankind. In recognition of International Day of Peace (September 21), join us in the planetarium for this special program examining how the nations of earth have come together to explore our planet, our solar system and our galaxy. Ages 7 to adult.

## 24th Annual DC Blues Festival

Saturday, September 1

12:00 noon at Carter Barron Amphitheatre  
Enjoy free music under the trees of Rock Creek Park! This year, the DC Blues Festival will include performances by the following bands: Sugar Ray and the Blue Tones, Sista Monica Parker, Clarence "the Bluesman" Turner, Lionel Young Band, DC Blues Society Band featuring Sista Ayaba Bey, and more. Carter Barron Amphitheatre is located at 16 Street NW and Colorado Avenue NW. No tickets necessary.

## Civil War Round Table: Spotlight on Elizabeth Thomas

Saturday, September 8

10:00 AM at the Nature Center and Planetarium  
Interested in learning more about the Civil War in Rock Creek Park? Join the Fort Stevens focus group for a short video viewing and discussion of Elizabeth "Aunt Betty" Thomas, "the owner of Fort Stevens". Ages 14 to adult.

## General Robert E. Lee and the Battle of Fort Stevens

Saturday, September 8

11:30 AM at the Nature Center and Planetarium  
Only one of Washington DC's Civil War fortresses was directly attacked during the Civil War: Fort Stevens. Discover the story of this battle and learn about General Robert E. Lee's challenges in 1864. Ages 8 to adult.

## Peek at the Creek

Saturday, September 8 and 29

2:00 PM at Peirce Mill  
The landscape surrounding Rock Creek has changed dramatically over time. Experience today's landscape and look for evidence of ages gone by. Ages 7 to adult.

## Exploring the Sky: Cassiopeia and Polaris

Saturday, September 15

8:00 PM at Military Field  
Join National Capital Astronomers and Rock Creek rangers and view space phenomena through the lens of a telescope. Can you identify Cassiopeia and the big dipper to the north? Bring your astronomical questions. Rain or heavy cloud cover cancels the event. Military Field is located on Glover Road NW, in between Military Road NW and Picnic Grove 13 ages welcome.

## Lincoln-Thomas Day

Saturday, September 22

12:00 PM—3:00 PM at Fort Stevens

Visit Fort Stevens and discover the life and legacy of Mrs. Elizabeth "Aunt Betty" Thomas, "the owner of Fort Stevens," during this special community event. Sponsored by the Military Road School Preservation Trust, Brightwood Community Association, Emory Beacon of Light, and the National Park Service, Lincoln-Thomas Day will culminate in the dedication of Elizabeth Thomas Way by Washington, DC Ward 4 Councilmember Muriel Browser. Fort Stevens is located on 13th Street NW and Quackenbos Street NW. For additional information, please call 202-241-7276. All ages welcome.

*Did you know? In a day and age when it was extremely rare for African American women to own property, Elizabeth "Aunt Betty" Thomas owned the land that became Fort Stevens. Discover the life and legacy of "Aunt Betty" during special events on September 8 and 22.*



**Elizabeth Thomas, circa 1880.**  
Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

# Rock Creek Park Day — Sunday, September 23

Established in September of 1890 on the same day that Sequoia and General Grant (later renamed Kings Canyon) National Parks in California were established, Rock Creek Park is one of the oldest national parks in the country. Furthermore, Rock Creek Park is one of the largest urban nature parks in the country. Discover and celebrate Rock Creek Park's natural and cultural history on its 122nd anniversary. **Special events (listed below) will take place on Sunday, September 23.**

## Before the Park History Hike

10:00 AM at the Nature Center and Planetarium  
An eccentric poet with a cabin in the woods, "bombs bursting in air" from Fort DeRussy during the Civil War... Discover what life was like in Rock Creek Park before 1890 on this two to three mile loop hike with a park ranger. Ages 9 to adult.

## Planetarium Film: Zula Patrol: Down to Earth

11:00 AM at the Nature Center and Planetarium  
The Zula Patrol turns up evidence that the villainous Deliria Delight has been travelling back in time to Earth's prehistoric past to illegally dump her company's toxic trash. The Zula Patrollers must find and catch her, before her actions cause catastrophic consequences. 24 minutes. Ages 4-8, and families.

## Peirce Mill Grinds Again

11:00 AM—3:00 PM at Peirce Mill  
Step back in time into the industrial revolution of 1800s America. Explore the four floors of Peirce Mill and see this water-powered machine in action. Milling demonstrations will take place on the hour and half hour. After exploring the mill, make sure to visit Peirce Barn next door and learn about the Peirce Estate and milling history of the Rock Creek Valley. All ages.

## Creature Feature

11:30 AM at the Nature Center and Planetarium  
Get acquainted with the Nature Center's live animals and assist in their feeding. Learn about park wildlife. All ages.

## Planetarium Film: Black Holes: the Edge of Infinity

12:00 PM at the Nature Center and Planetarium  
This cutting-edge production features high-resolution visualizations of cosmic phenomena, working with data generated by computer simulations, to bring the current science of black holes to the dome screen. 24 minutes. Ages 7 to adult.

## Autumn Night Sky: When I wish upon a Star

1:00 PM at the Nature Center and Planetarium  
Visit the only planetarium in the National Park System. View the season's brightest stars, planets, and constellations and learn their stories. Ages 5 to adult.

## Planetarium Film: Dawn of the Space Age

2:00 PM at the Nature Center and Planetarium  
Relive the excitement of the early days of space exploration, from the launch of the first artificial satellite sputnik, to the magnificent lunar landings and privately operated space flights of today. 41 minutes. Ages 8 to adult.

## Track Trails: Kids in Parks

2:00 PM at Picnic Grove 2  
Join the official ribbon cutting and then enjoy a two mile hike while experiencing the nature of Rock Creek Park along the way. Picnic Grove 2 is located on Beach Drive, across from Peirce Mill. All children and parents welcome.

## Planetarium Film: Oasis in Space

3:00 PM at the Nature Center and Planetarium  
Get transported on a startling and beautiful voyage through our universe, galaxy and solar system in search of liquid water - a key ingredient for life on Earth. 24 minutes. Ages 7 to adult.

## Exploring the Universe

4:00 PM at Nature Center and Planetarium  
Join us in the planetarium for a program exploring the sun, moon, stars, planets, and other space phenomena. Ages 7 to adult.



Above: Interpretive Volunteer explaining the millstones inside Peirce Mill. NPS Photo.  
Bottom right: the Rock Creek Park planetarium. Photo courtesy of the Washington Post.

## Special Programs in October

### Autumn Night Sky: the Weird and Spooky Sky

Saturdays in October

1:00 PM at the Nature Center and Planetarium

Join us in the planetarium for a spooky Halloween month program exploring the brightest and freakiest planets, stars, and constellations in the night sky. Ages 5 to adult.

### Civil War Medicine and the Battle of Fort Stevens

Saturday, October 6

11:00 AM at Fort Stevens

Only one of Washington DC's Civil War fortresses was directly attacked during the Civil War: Fort Stevens. Discover the story of this battle and learn about Civil War medicine during this special program. Ages 8 to adult.

### Make a Cornhusk Doll

Saturdays, October 6 and 20

2:00 PM at Peirce Barn

Make your own cornhusk doll just like the miller's children did! Supplies provided. Ages 4 to 10 and families.

### Exploring the Sky: Orionid Meteor Shower

Saturday, October 20

7:00 PM at Military Field

Join National Capital Astronomers and Rock Creek rangers and view space phenomena through the lens of a telescope. Make a wish as you observe a "shooting star". Bring your astronomical questions. Rain or heavy cloud cover cancels the event. Military Field is located on Glover Road NW, in between Military Road NW and Picnic Grove 13 ages. All ages welcome.

### Peirce Mill Candlelight Tours

Saturday, October 27

7:00 PM to 9:00 PM at Peirce Mill and Barn

Enjoy an autumn candlelight tour of historic Peirce Mill. Learn how this Oliver Evans style gristmill jump started the industrial revolution and explore how renewable energy powered Peirce Mill. 30 minute tours will begin at 7:00, 7:30, 8:00, and 8:30. Ages 9 to adult.

### Young Planetarium: the Weird and Spooky Night Sky

Wednesday, October 31

4:00 PM at the Nature Center and Planetarium

Wear your Halloween costume and learn about the spooky stars, planets, and constellations in the night sky. This program is geared for the youngest of astronomers. Ages 4-10 and families.

## Special Programs in November

### Exploring the Universe: Native American Sky

Saturdays in November

4:00 PM at the Nature Center and Planetarium

Celebrate National Native American Heritage Month by exploring American Indian constellations and star stories. Discover how the sun influenced the ancient cultures of the U.S. Southwest. Ages 7 to adult.

### Saving Private Ellis: the Battle of Fort Stevens and Private John Ellis

Saturday, November 3

11:00 AM at the Nature Center and Planetarium

Explore the life of Private John Ellis of the 61st Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry during this special program. Ages 8 to adult.

### Exploring the Sky: Pleiades and Winter Constellations

Saturday, November 3

7:00 PM at Military Field

Join National Capital Astronomers and Rock Creek rangers and view space phenomena through the lens of a telescope. Learn about star clusters and how to navigate the winter constellations. Bring your astronomical questions. Rain or heavy cloud cover cancels the event. Military Field is located on Glover Road NW, in between Military Road NW and Picnic Grove 13 ages. All ages welcome.

### Introductory Bird Hike

Saturday, November 10 and 17

9:00 AM at the Nature Center and Planetarium

Which birds remain year-round in Rock Creek Park? What features make birds unique? Join a park ranger on this introductory bird hike. Binoculars provided. No birding experience necessary. Ages 7 to adult.



Ranger leading a bird hike in Rock Creek Park. NPS Photo.

## Classic Programs (year-round)

### Young Planetarium

Wednesdays (except November 21)  
4:00 PM at the Nature Center and Planetarium  
Calling all young astronomers! Explore the stars, planets, and moon in this introductory planetarium program. Ages 4 to 8 and families.

### Seasonal Night Sky: When I wish upon a Star

Saturdays and Sundays in September and November  
Sundays in October  
1:00 PM at the Nature Center and Planetarium  
Visit the only planetarium in the National Park System and explore the month's brightest stars, planets, and constellations, and learn their stories. Ages 5 to adult.

### Exploring the Universe

Sundays in September and November  
Saturdays and Sundays in October  
4:00 PM at the Nature Center and Planetarium  
Join us in the planetarium for a program exploring the sun, moon, stars, planets, and other space phenomena. Ages 7 to adult.

### Creature Feature

Fridays  
4:00 PM at the Nature Center and Planetarium  
Get acquainted with the Nature Center's live animals and assist in their feeding. Learn about park wildlife. All ages.

### Ranger-led Horseback Tour

Select Sundays in September and October  
11:00 AM at the Horse Center  
Explore the beauty of Rock Creek Park on horseback with a ranger. Reservations must be made at least 24 hours in advance. Weight limits apply. Fee is \$40.00 per person. For more information, call 202-362-0117. Ages 12 to adult.

### Civil War Round Table

The first Saturday of October and November  
9:00 AM at the Nature Center and Planetarium  
Interested in learning more about the Civil War in Rock Creek Park? Join the Fort Stevens focus group's monthly meeting and Civil War discussions. Ages 14 to adult.

## Junior Ranger Camps: All Smiles in 2012

Rock Creek Park's tradition of hosting Junior Ranger Camps continued this summer, with more than 60 youth from the Washington, DC area learning about and exploring the park through myriad activities. Three free camps were offered in July, one each for youth ages seven through eight, nine through 10, and 11 through 12. The two-day Junior Ranger Camps ran from 10:00 am until 4:00 pm each day. Interpretive park rangers, interns, and DC Summer Youth led the camps.

Highlights from the Rock Creek Park 2012 Junior Ranger Camps included the following:

- The "New Name Game," in which campers picked out Rock Creek Park plant and wildlife names for themselves, which they then used for the remainder of the camp. Sarah, age eight, became "Poison ivy", while Josiah, age 10, became "White tailed deer"!
- "Oh Deer," a game led by Rock Creek Park Deer Management Interns. In this interactive game, campers learned how and why deer populations fluctuate. This led to a discussion of the park's recently approved White-tailed Deer Management Plan.
- "Black Holes: The Edge of Infinity," a film shown in the only planetarium in the National Park System. After they learned about space phenomena, the seven to eight year old campers constructed their own space ships by reusing plastic bottles, soda cans, and cardboard products. They then compared their new inventions with photos of NASA's space ships.

- Fun and informative discussions about birds, including what makes them unique among the animal kingdom. Children then used binoculars and took a bird hike, during which they viewed a red-tailed hawk eating a grey squirrel, American robins, and black-capped chickadees, among others.

Junior Ranger Camp enrollment starts in the beginning of May each year. These popular camps fill up very quickly! For more information, contact the park at 202-895-6070.



Junior Ranger Camp 2012: all smiles and silly faces! NPS Photo.

# September 2012

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

						<p>1</p> <p>1:00 PM Summer Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe: Peace in the Sky</p>
<p>2</p> <p>1:00 PM Summer Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>4:00 PM Young Planetarium</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>4:00 PM Creature Feature</p>	<p>8</p> <p>10:00 AM Civil War Round Table 11:30 AM Battle of Fort Stevens 1:00 PM Summer Night Sky 2:00 PM Peek at the Creek 4:00 PM Peace in the Sky</p>
<p>9</p> <p>1:00 PM Summer Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>4:00 PM Young Planetarium</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p> <p>9:00 AM Weeding Party with Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy 4:00 PM Creature Feature</p>	<p>15</p> <p>10:00 AM Ocean Conservancy International Clean-Up 1:00 PM Summer Night Sky 4:00 PM Peace in the Sky 8:00 PM Exploring the Sky: Cassiopeia and Polaris</p>
<p>16</p> <p>11:00 AM Ranger led Horseback Tour 1:00 PM Summer Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p> <p>4:00 PM Young Planetarium</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>4:00 PM Creature Feature</p>	<p>22</p> <p>12:00 PM—3:00 PM Lincoln-Thomas Day 1:00 PM Summer Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe: Peace in the Sky</p>
<p>23</p> <p>Rock Creek Park Day Special programs at Peirce Mill and the Nature Center and Planetarium.  See page 3 for details.</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p> <p>4:00 PM Young Planetarium</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>4:00 PM Creature Feature</p>	<p>29</p> <p>9:00 AM National Public Lands Day Weeding Party 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky 2:00 PM Peek at the Creek 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe: Peace in the Sky</p>
<p>30</p> <p>11:00 AM Ranger led Horseback Tour 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe</p>						

# October 2012

Sun

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Sat

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
			4:00 PM Young Planetarium		4:00 PM Creature Feature	9:00 A,M Civil War Round Table 11:00 AM Civil War Medicine 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky: the Weird and Spooky Sky 2:00 PM Make a Cornhusk Doll 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe	
7 11:00 AM Ranger led Horseback Tour 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe	8	9	4:00 PM Young Planetarium	10	11	12 9:00 AM Weeding Party with Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy 4:00 PM Creature Feature	13 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky: the Weird and Spooky Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe
14 11:00 AM Ranger led Horseback Tour 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe	15	16	4:00 PM Young Planetarium	17	18	19 4:00 PM Creature Feature	20 9:30 AM—4:00 PM Daffodil Planting with Rock Creek Conservancy 1:00 PM Weird and Spooky Sky 2:00 PM Make a Cornhusk Doll 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe 7:00 PM Orionid Meteor Shower
21 11:00 AM Ranger led Horseback Tour 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe	22	23	4:00 PM Young Planetarium	24	25	26 4:00 PM Creature Feature	27 9:00 AM Weeding Party 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky: the Weird and Spooky Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe 7:00 to 9:00 PM Peirce Mill Candlelight Tours
28 11:00 AM Ranger led Horseback Tour 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe	29	30	4:00 PM Young Planetarium: the Weird and Spooky Sky	31			

# November 2012

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

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				1	2	3
					9:00 AM Weeding Party with Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy 4:00 PM Creature Feature	9:00 A,M Civil War Round Table 11:00 AM Saving Private Ellis 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe: Native American Sky 7:00 PM Exploring the Sky
4 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe	5	6	7 4:00 PM Young Planetarium	8	9 4:00 PM Creature Feature	10 9:00 AM Introductory Bird Hike 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe: Native American Sky
11 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe	12	13	14 4:00 PM Young Planetarium	15	16 4:00 PM Creature Feature	17 9:00 AM Introductory Bird Hike 9:00 A,M Weeding Party with Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe: Native American Sky
18 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe	19	20	21	22 Happy Thanksgiving!  Nature Center and Planetarium, Peirce Mill & Barn, and Old Stone House closed for holiday.	23 4:00 PM Creature Feature	24 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe: Native American Sky
25 1:00 PM Autumn Night Sky 4:00 PM Exploring the Universe	26	27	28 4:00 PM Young Planetarium	29	30 4:00 PM Creature Feature	

# Park Partners

## Alice Ferguson Foundation

Founded in 1954 as a non-profit chartered by the state of Maryland, Alice Ferguson Foundation provides experiences that encourage connections between people, the natural environment, farming, and the cultural heritage of the Potomac River watershed, thus leading to personal environmental responsibility. Alice Ferguson Foundation and the National Park Service co-host approximately 20 high school hands-on environmental education field trips per year through the “Bridging the Watershed” program. For more information, visit <http://fergusonfoundation.org/>.



## Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy

Formed in 2010, Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy is a non-profit group that works to restore the historical “naturalistic garden” landscape of Dumbarton Oaks Park. Located in Georgetown, Dumbarton Oaks Park was designed in the 1920s by Beatrix Farrand, the first professional female landscape architect in the United States. Learn more about Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy at <http://www.dopark.org>.



## Friends of Georgetown Waterfront Park

Friends of Georgetown Waterfront Park is a non-profit group that works to raise awareness of the park and support its maintenance through fundraising. For more information about this friends group, visit <http://www.georgetownwaterfrontpark.org/aboutfogwp/>.

Friends Of GWP

## Friends of Peirce Mill

Friends of Peirce Mill is a non-profit group that works with the National Park Service to raise the needed funds to restore and preserve the historic integrity of the mill. Friends of Peirce Mill also supplies volunteers to help interpret the mill to park visitors. For more information, visit <http://www.peircemill-friends.org>.



## National Capital Astronomers

Serving science and society since 1937, National Capital Astronomers is a non-profit, volunteer-run public service corporation dedicated to advancing space knowledge of and appreciation for astronomy and space technology. In partnership with the National Park Service, National Capital Astronomers hosts the “Exploring the Sky” telescope series in Rock Creek Park once a month from April to November. For more information, visit <http://capitalastronomers.org/>.



## Potomac Appalachian Trail Club

Potomac Appalachian Trail Club is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization that was founded in 1927 to plan and build the Appalachian Trail. The trail club now manages more than 1,200 miles of hiking trails in the Mid-Atlantic region. Working with the National Park Service, Potomac Appalachian Trail Club volunteers maintain Rock Creek Park’s trail system. For more information, visit <http://www.patc.net/PublicView/>.



## Rock Creek Conservancy

Rock Creek Conservancy is a non-profit group working to protect and restore the Rock Creek watershed. Rock Creek Conservancy is the only organization that focuses on the environmental protection of Rock Creek in its entirety—the creek flows 33 miles through the Washington DC metropolitan area, crossing federal lands as well as city, county, and state boundaries. Although parkland borders much of the creek, the surrounding development threatens the health and beauty of these natural areas. Learn more about Rock Creek Conservancy and find out how you can help protect the national capital’s creek. Visit <http://www.rockcreekconservancy.org>.



## Student Conservation Association

Student Conservation Association provides college students and others with meaningful conservation service internships throughout the National Park System. This summer, in addition to hosting Student Conservation Association work crews that removed invasive plants from Dumbarton Oaks Park, Rock Creek Park hosted two Student Conservation Association Interns: a Junior Ranger Ambassador Intern developed a new Junior Ranger booklet, and a Biological Sciences Intern removed tons of invasive-exotic plant species from the park. For more information, visit <http://www.thesca.org>.



## Be a VIP (Volunteer-in-Park)!

Are you interested in enhancing your customer service and interpretation skills? Need to complete community service hours for a school course? Want to protect the park, enjoy physical exercise, and meet new friends? Retired and looking to give back? If you answered yes to any or all of these questions, then consider becoming a Volunteer-in-Park (VIP). Rock Creek Park is currently recruiting for the following positions:

- Nature Center Visitor Services Volunteer
- Peirce Mill Interpretive Volunteer
- Old Stone House Interpretive Volunteer
- GPS Coordinates Volunteer

For more information on volunteering or to apply for a position, please contact the Volunteer Program Coordinator at 202-895-6227, or by email at [scott\\_einberger@nps.gov](mailto:scott_einberger@nps.gov).



## Special Volunteer Events this Autumn

### Weeding Party with Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy

Saturdays, September 14 and 29, October 12 and 27, November 2 and 17

9:00 AM at Dumbarton Oaks Park

Join Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy and the National Park Service in the fight against invasive plant species. Remove exotic ivy from the naturalistic landscape of Beatrix Farrand's Dumbarton Oaks Park in Georgetown. Volunteers must be 16 years of age or older. Long pants, long sleeve shirts, and close-toed shoes required. To access Dumbarton Oaks Park, park on R Street NW and walk down Lovers Lane (in between Dumbarton Oaks Estate and Montrose Park). For more information, visit Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy at <http://www.dopark.org>.

### Take Action for the Ocean: Ocean Conservancy International Clean-Up

Saturday, September 15

10:00 AM at Peirce Mill

For a better earth, don't be trashy! Learn about a major environmental challenge facing Rock Creek Park and the oceans of the world, and then "sweep the creek" with a Rock Creek Conservancy staff member. Become a Citizen Scientist and record trash data for Ocean Conservancy. Bags and gloves provided. Ages 9 to adult.

### National Public Lands Day Volunteering with Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy

Saturday, September 29

9:00 AM at Dumbarton Oaks Park

See "Weeding Party with Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy" for more information.

### Daffodil and Wildflower Planting with Rock Creek Conservancy

Saturday, October 20

9:30 to 4:00 in shifts

According to singer and songwriter Tom Petty, "You belong among the wildflowers." Join Rock Creek Rangers and Rock Creek Conservancy staff members in planting 4,500 daffodil bulbs and 1,500 perennial wildflowers along the Rock Creek & Potomac Parkway. Meeting location is on Pennsylvania Avenue NW next to the Four Seasons Hotel in Georgetown. Groups and individual volunteers accepted! To register, please visit <http://www.rockcreekconservancy.org/>.



Forsythia Hill in Dumbarton Oaks Park. Help us restore the park this fall by volunteering. NPS Photo.

## Spotlight on Bill Yeaman

*If there ever was a "Passion for the Park" Award, Rock Creek Park Resource Specialist Bill Yeaman would probably win. Since the time when Richard Nixon was president, Bill has been interpreting and protecting the natural resources of Rock Creek Park. From 1972 until 1985, Bill served as an interpretive park ranger. He became a natural resource specialist in the mid 1980s and has been focused on watershed issues and creek protection ever since. Recently, Bill took a break from his busy day to sit down and reflect on his successful career...*

### Why do you like Rock Creek Park?

I like working in Rock Creek Park because my office includes over 2,000 acres of natural woodland, streams, wetlands, and open space. I've found great joy in learning about the park's natural resources and sharing this information with the park visitors as well as working to protect these sensitive resources from damaging impacts. It is extremely gratifying to be part of a team that is doing whatever they can to protect and perpetuate the park's resources so that current park visitors as well as those that will visit the park in 100 or 200 years will have the opportunity to be enthralled and excited by the beautiful song of a live wood thrush, the quacking sound of a wood frog, the spooky whinnies of a screech owl, or the sight of a mass of salamander eggs.

### What is your favorite spot in the park?

My favorite spot in Rock Creek is the northern flood plain extending from West Beach Dr. to just beyond the Md./DC border. This area offers one of the most sensitive habitats in the park with an abundance of spring wildflowers as well as the park's few vernal pools, which provide critical at-risk habitat for sensitive amphibian species. While working at the nature center, I gave interpretive walks throughout the park but my favorite location was always the northern floodplain with its diverse and sensitive flora and fauna. During my earliest visits to this special area, I was greeted with the hoots of a pair of barred owls. I even found their nesting tree snag. I was so turned on by this area that I planned and led a series of night and dawn walks (4:30 am) to encourage and welcome park visitors to join me in experiencing the special sights and sounds of this section of Rock Creek Park.

### Are there any challenges facing Rock Creek Park?

Rock Creek Park is a largely isolated natural community surrounded by urban areas and development that significantly impact park resources. Major threats facing the park include deer populations, invasive plants, storm water run-off, and social or unauthorized trails.

The tremendous explosion in the park's deer population over the last 25 years has resulted in significant over-browsing, which has greatly reduced the number of seedlings and saplings in the forest as well as the native vegetation in the understory and on the forest floor. This is altering the natural patterns of forest succession and is having a major negative impact on forest regeneration and sensitive wildlife species.

The increase in invasive species and the resulting damage they continue to cause has been significant and dramatic during my time in Rock Creek. The list of invasive species in the park is long and frightful as they outcompete, infect, displace, or prey upon the park's native species and drastically impact the park's biodiversity. For example, when I first started working in the park, the northern floodplain was a wonderland of a wide range of native wildflowers including spring beauty, trout lily, bluebells, toothwort, jack-in-the-pulpit, star chickweed, golden ragwort, and many others. But the invasive buttercup-lesser celandine, now dominates this area and has displaced the wide range of native wildflowers that used to be so common there. This invasive plant as well as others have changed the ecology of this floodplain community and impacted the native animals that use this area as their living space.

A lack of adequate storm water management throughout the Rock Creek watershed continues to negatively impact and damage park resources. During storm events, a wide range of pollutants, including sediment, bacteria, oil and gas, heavy metals, and nutrients wash off of parking lots, roads, and lawns and into storm sewers which eventually drain into Rock Creek and its tributaries. Large volumes of storm water drain into the park during storm events, which causes excessive stream channel and stream bank erosion, damages aquatic habitat, and reduces groundwater recharge. Combined sewer overflows drain into the lower portions of Rock Creek and the numerous sanitary sewers that cross Rock Creek and the tributaries are decades old and have chronic leaks.

The dramatic and continuing increase in social or unauthorized trails throughout the park continues to cause significant damage to sensitive and fragile forest and wildlife habitat, has opened new pathways for the spread (continued on next page)



Bill Yeaman, Natural Resource Specialist. NPS Photo.

(“Spotlight on Bill Yeaman,” continued from Page 12)

of invasive plants, and has increased the fragmentation of the forest.

### What have been some of your greatest successes at Rock Creek Park?

My time at Rock Creek has been filled with many wonderful and memorable experiences, successes, and accomplishments. While at the nature center, I was fortunate enough to have learned to operate and give interpretive programs at the planetarium. This was especially rewarding as this occurred during the time that NASA’s Voyager probes were sending back fantastic photos from Jupiter, Saturn, Neptune, and Uranus and the historic launches of the Space Shuttle program were just beginning.

My eventual move to the Resource Management office resulted in new challenges and successes. One of the highlights was coordinating a major effort to improve fish passage on Rock Creek. The project involved modifying or eliminating fish barriers at eight locations on Rock Creek to restore historic spawning fish habitat for a number of migratory fish species. The major milestone for the project was the construction of a fish ladder at the historic Peirce Mill dam.

Other memorable accomplishments have included the recent construction of regenerative stormwater conveyance systems in tributaries and drainages to Rock Creek. These systems restore and stabilize degraded streams, increase aquatic habitat and improve groundwater recharge. They prevent erosion of the



Regenerative stormwater conveyance systems near Oregon Avenue, NW. NPS Photo.

stream channel and stream banks.

Another major success was working with the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to dramatically improve stream conditions and preserve aquatic habitat in Whittier Run. The project involved redirecting all of the storm flows from 16th Street that were discharging directly into Whittier Run into a new storm sewer that was built under Sherrill Drive. This eliminated all storm flows into this sensitive stream tributary to Rock Creek.

Other successes have included my discovery of four new locations in the park of the federally endangered Hay’s spring amphipod. Also of significance was working with DC Water to put protective linings in a number of sanitary sewers located in the park to prevent leakage and pollution in the tributaries. I also have been involved with DC Water to identify and correct a number of sanitary sewer connections to the storm sewer system that were polluting Rock Creek and its tributaries. Another important success was working with the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and park maintenance to construct a new gauge station at Joyce Rd. and working with USGS to install monitoring equipment which gathers continuous water quality data for Rock Creek.

It’s been a great ride!

## Contact Us

### Nature Center & Planetarium

5200 Glover Road NW  
Washington, DC 20015  
202-895-6070  
Wednesday-Sunday  
9:00 am — 5:00 pm

### Peirce Mill & Barn

2401 Tilden Street NW  
Washington, DC 20015  
202-895-6070  
Wednesday-Sunday,  
10:00 am — 4:00 pm

### Old Stone House

3051 M Street NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
Daily, 11:00 am — 6:00 pm

### Rock Creek Park Golf Course

16th Street NW and Rittenhouse Street NW  
Washington, DC 20011  
202-882-7332

### Rock Creek Park Tennis Center

16th Street NW and Kennedy Street NW  
Washington, DC 20011  
202-772-5949

### Rock Creek Park Horse Center

5100 Glover Road NW  
Washington, DC 20015  
202-362-0117

### Thompson Boat Center

2900 Virginia Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20037  
202-333-9543

### Important Phone Numbers

Park Headquarters 202-895-6000  
U.S. Park Police 202-610-7505  
Special Use Permits 202-895-6013

### Become a Friend of Rock Creek Park on:



Be the first to know about special events and park news. Sign up to receive this free E-newsletter and schedule of events by emailing [ROCR\\_superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:ROCR_superintendent@nps.gov).

# Last Look



Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall (right) and Poet Robert Frost in Dumbarton Oaks Park, part of Rock Creek Park, 1962.

Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.